

# Northumbria Research Link

Citation: Fitzgerald, Ian (2014) Polish migrant workers in the north: integration and xenophobia. In: Newcastle University Human Resources Management, Work and Employment Research Group, 13 February 2014, Newcastle University.

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# Polish migrant workers in the north: integration and xenophobia

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# Context

Research began in 2005 and has been extensive  
current project colleague from Polish Academy of  
Sciences;



# Context




**TESCO RIP OFF WORKERS!**  
In Greenhills Distribution Centre

~~Workers Rights~~

**demand one**  
Reinstate Zbysek Bukala and Radek Sawicki

The agencies attempt to transfer them to work in another company is nothing more than silencing the voices of workers. There was not even an attempt to find a solution through dialogue.

**demand two**  
All agency staff should get a contract after 3 months

Contracted workers get over €500 a week, agency staff get just €320. There is no justification for such a policy. Three months on the agency's leash is enough. If Tesco need us, they should treat us as normal workers.

**demand two**  
End the compulsory 1000 boxes a day pick rate

Stop the raising of the daily norm. Intimidation and dismissal of workers who fall short of it can not be accepted. Everyone works to their physical abilities and health & safety regulations we were taught in training.

see [www.indymedia.ie](http://www.indymedia.ie) for details

**TESCO**  
ripping off workers

**Labour Source Ltd** (24hr contracts)

**Reef Recruitment**

limited working within vulnerable employment  
agency workers  
business employment  
contract

**Adecco**  
better work, better life

**Tempco Staffing Ltd** (contract for service)



# Context

Data obtained at local, regional, national and international levels -

(i) firstly semi-structured interviews with key respondents (trade unions - government agencies - Citizens Advice Bureaux - Polish community activists;

(ii) Limited use of questionnaires first project questionnaire with 20 Polish building workers. Also EU work and Polish Internet project;

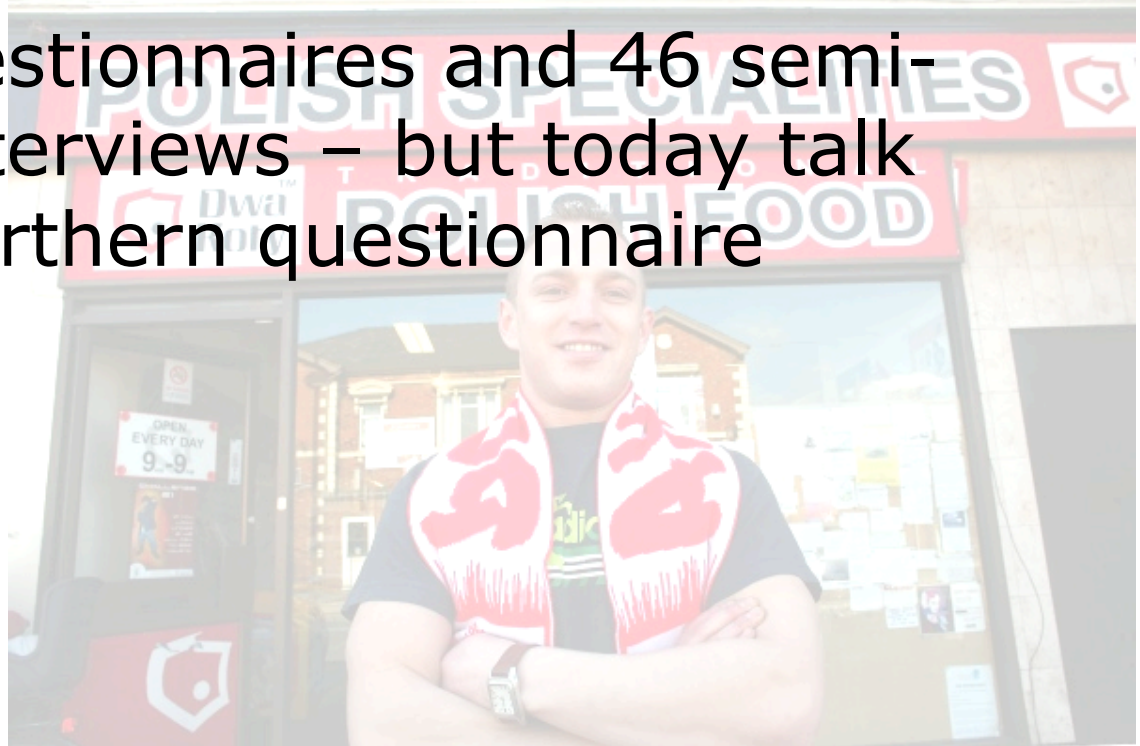
Attendance at Polish community events.



# Integration

Current project is investigating moral panics and the Polish migration:

- Data 143 questionnaires and 46 semi-structured interviews – but today talk about 122 northern questionnaire responses.





# Integration

Integrated into British society?:

- 51 out of 122 felt integrated;



***I probably have more  
British friends than Poles.***

***yes, good relations with people  
and neighbours***

***Yes, I am accepted and feel  
good in the community***

***yes, I live and work exclusively with  
the British***

***Yes, I feel integrated into British  
society, because generally they  
are fantastic people....***

***yes, I do participate in local elections,***

***I guess I am***

***generally yes, it is hard to integrate  
with indigenous population but it is  
even harder to integrate with your  
Polish migrant fellows***

***I have good relations...***

# Integration

Membership of UK or Polish organisations:

7 were trade union members; *...work in the factory for 12 hours - sort of Polish hell...*

*...in my town Poles do not want to integrate...*

7 were involved in other UK organisations (Church – volunteer at social services – free interpretation for organisations – drug addition); *...I am not surprised about bad opinions that are circulating about Poles...*

But only 31 felt integrated into the local Polish community. With 11 poor comments about fellow Poles.

*...do not speak English and have many pretensions.*

*No, because Polish community is full of envy...*



# Xenophobia



# Xenophobia

Over half (62 of 122) of respondents had experienced some form of xenophobic incident. Of which 14 incidents were at work;

***Where I live I was verbally abused***

***...statement about taking British jobs...***

***...my car was damaged and my home window was damaged...***

***Often it happens in poor districts of Manchester like Salford...***

***Frequent attacks on our estates, broken fences, broken glass...***

***...you can feel it when listening TV programmes that cover migrant issues.***

***....newspapers articles...***

***...neighbour called me Polish whore...***

***...said I should leave country because Englishman cannot get a job...***

# Xenophobia – cross cutting themes

Of those 62 who had incidents:

Only 18 felt integrated into British society;

But 24 felt integrated into the Polish community;

Nine were either union members or engaged in UK or Polish community organisations;

25 indicated poor working conditions but 18 of these noted a good economic situation in the UK;

Over half (36) 62 indicated that their economic situation was 'good' (overall 43 + 29 correct).

# Conclusions

I want to be positive and state that 60 did not have any racial incidents. There has been significant growth of Polish shops and other 'cultural aspects', including business start-up;

But some of our media and Politian's preach a different narrative;

Theory? We might say Cohen and moral panics whilst discussing class and social capital;

But xenophobia as we know is cross cutting;

What is sad is that 92 (75%) of total respondents had been here since at least 2008 or before;

So who needs to change or integrate? British (often expressed as English) society or those who migrate to our shores?